

**4VAC15-240-20. Game: Turkey: Open Season; Certain Counties and Areas; Saturday Prior to the Last Monday in October and for 13 Days Following, and on Thanksgiving Day.**

**Summary:**

The proposal is to i) open the fall season one week earlier and ii) remove Warren county from this section.

**Proposed language of amendment:**

- 1 4 VAC 15-240-20. Open Season; Certain Counties and Areas; 14 days immediately before the Saturday  
2 prior to the ~~last first~~ Monday in ~~October~~ November ~~and for 13 days following~~ and on Thanksgiving Day.  
3  
4 It shall be lawful to hunt turkeys 14 days immediately before the Saturday prior to the ~~last first~~ Monday in  
5 ~~October~~ November ~~and for 13 days following~~ and on Thanksgiving Day in the counties of Albemarle,  
6 Alleghany, Augusta, Bath, Greene, Highland, Madison, Page, Orange, and Rockingham ~~and Warren~~.

**Rationale:**

This proposal will maintain a uniform opening date for the fall turkey season by opening these 10 counties with the general fall season. The proposed fall season would open one week earlier so it would not overlap the early deer muzzleloader season. As described in the rationale for 4 VAC 15-240-10 above, an earlier season was requested by turkey hunters and Law Enforcement officers.

The shorter fall season (two weeks and Thanksgiving Day) was proposed in 2011 because these 11 counties (including Warren) had stable or declining populations at very low densities. Turkey populations have generally responded positively to the shorter season. Five of 11 are showing population growth. However, turkey populations in six counties are still stable and densities are at very low or low levels (see below). Therefore, we are not proposing a second day of hunting during Thanksgiving Week in these counties.

Our criterion for removing counties from this conservative season is attainment of the statewide average population density (moderate density rating). Warren County now meets this criterion; therefore, we propose it be moved from this regulation to the new six-week fall season being proposed below (4 VAC 15-240-32). This will provide four additional weeks of fall hunting in Warren County: two weeks in December and two weeks in January.

Status of Counties with Two-Week Fall Season				
County	Trend	Turkeys Per	Percent of	Density
		Sq. Mile Suitable Habitat		
Warren	Increasing	0.5	111%	Moderate
Bath	Increasing	0.36	80%	Low
Alleghany	Stable	0.33	73%	Low
Page	Increasing	0.32	71%	Low
Augusta	Increasing	0.3	67%	Low
Orange	Increasing	0.29	64%	Low
Highland	Stable	0.24	53%	Very Low
Albemarle	Stable	0.23	51%	Very Low
Madison	Stable	0.21	47%	Very Low
Rockingham	Stable	0.14	31%	Very Low
Greene	Stable	0.13	29%	Very Low
State	Stable	0.45		